

NAVAL CADETS APPOINTED AT LARGE.

LETTER

FROM

THE ACTING SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,

RELATING TO

THE BILL (S. 3442) TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF NAVAL CADETS
TO BE APPOINTED AT LARGE BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE UNITED
STATES NAVAL ACADEMY.

MARCH 23, 1900.—Referred to the Committee on Naval Affairs and ordered to
printed.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, March 21, 1900.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 15th instant, inclosing a copy of the bill (S. 3442) "to increase the number of cadets to be appointed at large by the President to the United States Naval Academy," and requesting the views of the Department in regard to the same.

In reply I have to inform you that an increase in the number of officers in the Navy is necessarily required. The number available for duty now is, and for some time past has been, insufficient for the needs of the service; and as the bill above referred to would tend to relieve the present deficiency the Department perceives no objection to its passage.

Inasmuch as the relief afforded by the enactment of S. 3442 would be insufficient to meet the demand for additional officers, the attention of the committee is invited to the Department's communication of the 28th ultimo, a copy of which is inclosed, transmitting the draft of a bill authorizing that upon the completion of the four years' course at the Naval Academy the place of a cadet should be considered vacant and another nomination should be made to fill the vacancy thus caused. This measure would, in the opinion of the Department, cause a more gradual increase in the number of graduates of the Naval Academy, and thereby better meet the needs of the service.

Very respectfully,

CHAS. H. ALLEN,
Acting Secretary.

Hon. EUGENE HALE,
Chairman Committee on Naval Affairs, United States Senate.
S. Doc. 25—5

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, February 17, 1900.

SIR: With the progress of naval construction and the consequent addition to the Navy from year to year of vessels of the various classes, large and small, an increase in the number of officers and men available to provide the requisite complement for new vessels is necessarily required; and this increase should bear some proportion to the annually augmented strength of the Navy. At its last session Congress authorized an increase in the number of enlisted men and boys from 13,750 to 20,000, and the Department finds it necessary now to request that steps be taken to provide additional officers, the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, whose duty it is to "establish the complement of all ships in commission," having reported that the number of officers available for such duty is, and for some time past has been, insufficient.

Among the several methods by which the number of officers might be increased, Congress has considered without favorably acting thereupon a proposition to reduce the course at the Naval Academy from six to four years, and thus adding to the number of graduates of that institution available for appointment as commissioned officers of the lowest grades. Assuming that Congress may be averse to the adoption of this method, it is suggested as an alternative plan that the districts represented respectively by the cadets who have completed the four years' course of study at the Naval Academy be treated as vacant, and such vacancies filled at once, without awaiting the result of the two years' cruise at sea. This requirement of two years at sea before receiving a commission may, if this plan be adopted, still be retained, since the services of naval cadets during such two years' cruise may be utilized in the performance on board ship of duties not materially dissimilar from those to which junior commissioned officers of the Navy are assigned. A draft of a measure embodying the foregoing suggestions is inclosed for the convenience of the committee.

If the plan thus outlined is not viewed with favor, it is suggested that the requirements of the service would be met by a provision authorizing the annual appointment of two additional cadets at large from each State, such appointments to be made either by the President or upon the nomination of the Senators from the States to which the appointments are respectively accredited, as may be deemed expedient.

It is noted that any plan effecting an increase in the number of cadets graduated from the Naval Academy would fail to accomplish the desired result unless the limitations imposed by existing provisions of law upon the number of officers to be appointed annually are removed. A clause has accordingly been placed in the draft above mentioned providing for the repeal of so much of the act of August 5, 1882 (22 Stat. L., p. 284), and other provisions of law on the subject as prescribe that no greater number of appointments from the graduating class of the Naval Academy shall be made than shall equal the number of vacancies occurring during the preceding year in the lowest grades of commissioned officers of the Navy and Marine Corps.

Very respectfully,

JOHN D. LONG, *Secretary.*

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON NAVAL AFFAIRS,
House of Representatives.

Item.

When any cadet at the Naval Academy shall have completed his four years' course his place at the Academy shall become vacant, and nomination to fill such vacancy shall be made in the manner now prescribed by law: *Provided*, That all laws and parts of laws limiting the number of appointments of commissioned officers of the Navy and Marine Corps to be made annually from the graduates of the Naval Academy are hereby repealed.

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